

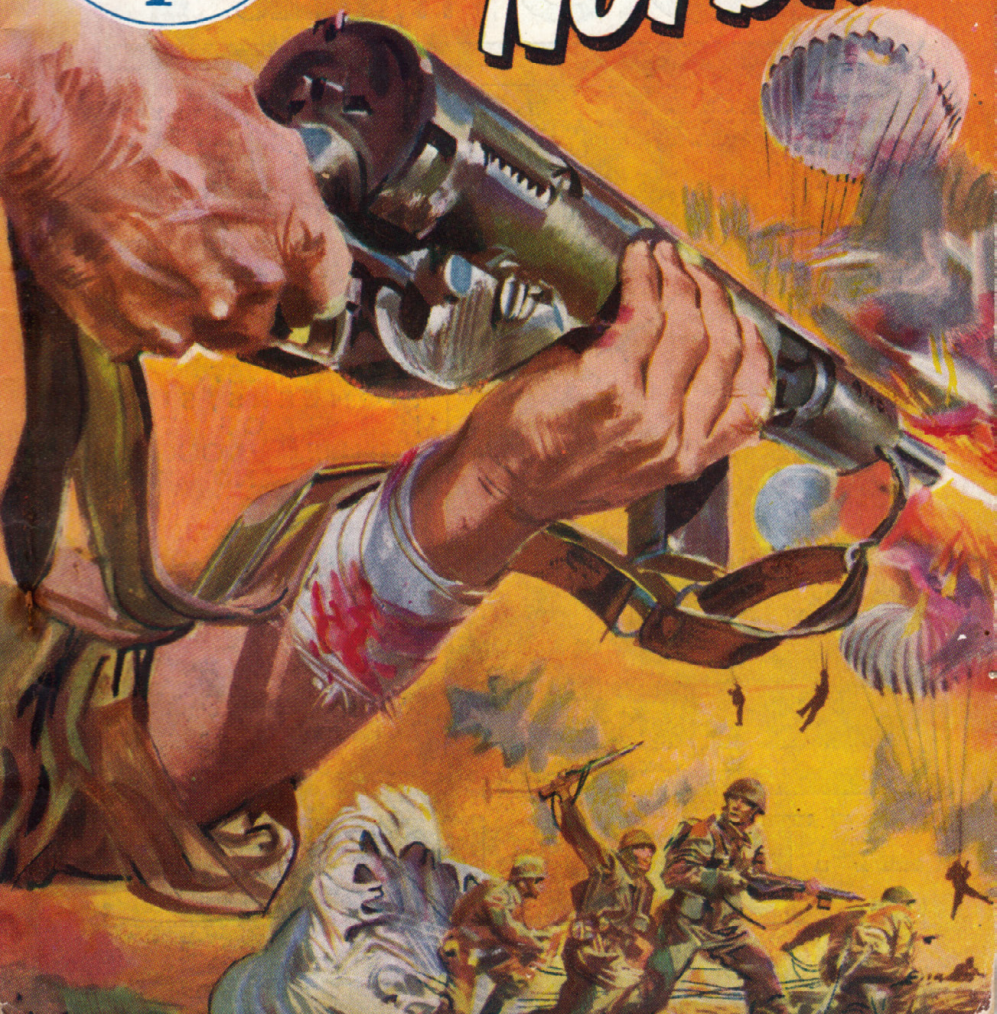
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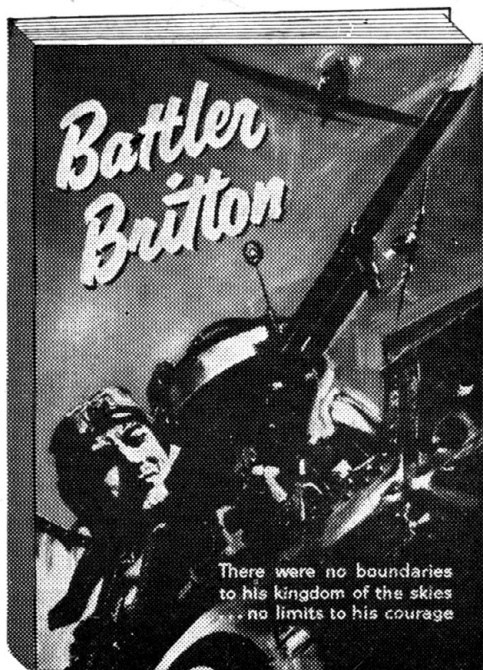
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THEY SHALL NOT DIE



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BATTLER BRITTON

They Shall Not Die



IN THE COBBLED STREETS OF THE DUTCH TOWN OF ARNHEM, THE BRITISH 1ST AIRBORNE DIVISION LEFT THEIR HEROIC DEAD, OUTNUMBERED AND OUTGUNNED, CUT TO A QUARTER OF THEIR ORIGINAL STRENGTH, THE PARATROOPERS FOUGHT A STUBBORN REARGUARD ACTION TOWARDS THE RIVER THAT FLOWED SOUTH OF THE TOWN.

Chapter 1. RETREAT FROM ARNHEM



THE STRAGGLING LINE OF MEN SLOWED--THEN HALTED AND SERGEANT FRASER HURRIED FORWARD. HIS OFFICER, CAPTAIN ROSE, WAS LOOKING ABOUT HIM INDECISIVELY ...



THE THICK-SET YOUNG OFFICER STIFFENED AT THE FLAT REJECTION OF HIS JUDGMENT AND WITH RESENTFUL EYES HE FOLLOWED SERGEANT FRASER'S POINTING FINGER...



BUT THE SERGEANT STOOD HIS GROUND. CAPTAIN ROSE FLARED UP INSTANTLY...



They Shall Not Die

WITH FACE SET GRIMLY AND SEEMINGLY DEAF TO HIS SCANDALISED CAPTAIN'S SHOUTS, SERGEANT FRASER TURNED AND STRODE OFF ALONG THE PATH OF HIS OWN CHOOSING. AT ONCE A HANDFUL OF MEN, WHO KNEW THEIR SERGEANT, TRUDGED DOGGEDLY AFTER HIM.



OF THE TWO, SERGEANT FRASER WAS RIGHT. SOON HIS FEW EXULTANT FOLLOWERS WERE CLAMBERING INTO ONE OF THE FERRY BOATS. BUT THERE WAS NO TRIUMPH IN THE SERGEANT'S THOUGHTS...



SUDDENLY A RAGGED STUTTER OF SMALL ARMS CUT THROUGH THE OVERTONES OF BOOMING GUNS. EVERY MAN TENSED ...

THAT WAS
JUST BACK
IN THE
WOODS
SARGE.

IT SOUNDS
LIKE THE
CAPTAIN
HAS ...



BILL FRASER BIT OFF THE WORDS. SEIZED BY A COLD DREAD, HE STARTED BACK.

THE FIRING HAD CEASED BUT THE SERGEANT RAN ON. A LOW GROAN ATTRACTED HIS ATTENTION AND A MOMENT LATER, HE NEARLY STUMBLED OVER THE INERT FORM OF CAPTAIN ROSE.

RAN INTO JERRY
PATROL ... NOT A
CHANCE ... ALL KILLED.
JUST LEAVE ME.

YOU'RE COMING
WITH ME, SIR.



IGNORING THE FURIOUS PROTESTS OF THE WOUNDED OFFICER, FRASER HOISTED HIM ON TO HIS SHOULDER. IT WAS NO TIME FOR ARGUMENTS...



PUT ME DOWN, CURSE YOU! I'LL FIND MY OWN WAY BACK!

YOU'D NEVER MAKE IT.

STILL THERE WAS NOTHING BUT BITING RESENTMENT IN THE OFFICER'S HEART FOR THE MAN WHO HAD SAVED HIM...



DON'T KID YOURSELF THIS'LL MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE, FRASER. I'LL HAVE YOU NAILED FOR DISOBEYING ORDERS IF IT'S THE LAST THING I DO.

CAPTAIN ROSE'S THREAT, UTTERED ON THOSE STRIFE-TORN BANKS OF THE NEDER RHINE, WAS NOT AN IDLE ONE. WITH THE TUMULT OF ARNHEM BEHIND HIM AND BACK ONCE MORE IN ENGLAND, SERGEANT BILL FRASER FOUND HIMSELF FACING A REGIMENTAL COURT-MARTIAL. THE CHARGE -- DISOBEYING AN ORDER WHILST ON ACTIVE SERVICE.



IF THE ACCUSED AND HIS PARTY HAD STAYED WITH US, AS ORDERED, OUR NUMBERS MIGHT HAVE WARDERD OFF TOTAL DESTRUCTION FROM THE GERMAN PATROL.

IN DEFENCE, I WOULD REMIND THE COURT THAT ALL WHO DID SURVIVE OWE A DEBT TO THE SOUND SENSE AND COURAGE OF THE ACCUSED.

AT LAST, SERGEANT FRASER WAS BROUGHT FOR THE LAST TIME BEFORE THE CONVENING OFFICERS. THERE HE HEARD THE MEASURED TONES ADDRESSED TO HIM ...

SERGEANT FRASER, THE COURT FINDS YOU GUILTY OF THE CHARGE BROUGHT AGAINST YOU. APART FROM THE INCIDENT NAMED IN THE CHARGE, YOUR SERVICE UNDER FIRE HAS BEEN GOOD SO THE COURT HAS CONFINED ITS SENTENCE TO A SEVERE REPRIMAND.



THE DAYS AND WEEKS PASSED -- ARNHEM HAD BECOME A MEMORY AND AN INSPIRATION TO THOSE WHO CAME BACK. OTHER BATTLES, OTHER OPERATIONS WERE BEING PLANNED. AND IT WAS FOR ONE OF THESE THAT CAPTAIN ROBERT WAKEFIELD WAS INTRODUCED TO SKOLK ISLAND, OFF DENMARK, BY HIS COMMANDING OFFICER.

AN AIRBORNE FORCE WILL DROP ON SKOLK AND ELIMINATE THE GERMAN GARRISON. IT WILL THEN DESTROY A FACTORY PRODUCING HEAVY WATER -- VITALLY NEEDED BY THE GERMANS FOR THEIR EXPERIMENTS IN ATOMIC ENERGY.

HEAVY WATER ?
OR DEUTERIUM
OXIDE WHEN
I WAS AT
SCHOOL !



BRIGADIER COKE'S CLIPPED TONES WENT ON AS CAPTAIN WAKEFIELD EXAMINED THE PICTURE THRUST INTO HIS HAND ...

HERE'S AN AERIAL PHOTO OF THE FACTORY-- CLOSE BY A CANAL, YOU'LL SEE. WITH GERMANY CLOSE TO BEING BEATEN, SHE WILL MAKE FRANTIC EFFORTS TO PERFECT AN ATOM BOMB-- AND TAKE US ALL WITH HER!

PHEW-- THIS ISN'T FUNNY, IS IT?



THE TWO MEN THEN BENT OVER A DETAILED MAP OF THE ISLAND ...

THIS LARGE RING MARKS THE SOUTHERN TIP. THE DROPPING ZONE. A FORWARD PARTY WILL HAVE TO DROP BY NIGHT AND MARK IT OUT FOR THE MAIN FORCE. I WANT YOU, WAKEFIELD, TO LEAD THAT FORWARD PARTY.



WITH QUICKENING ENTHUSIASM, CAPTAIN WAKEFIELD CHOSE LIEUTENANT LEWIS FOR HIS SECOND-IN-COMMAND. A SENIOR N.C.O. WAS REQUIRED TO HANDLE THE FORTY STRONG PARTY. SUDDENLY HE KNEW WHO HE WANTED ...

I'D LIKE TO HAVE SERGEANT FRASER, SIR.



I'D STILL LIKE HIM, SIR.

SERGEANT FRASER! YOU KNOW, OF COURSE, THAT HE DISOBEYED HIS OFFICER'S DIRECT ORDER AT ARNHEM?



THE BRIGADIER LOOKED DOUBTFULLY AT WAKEFIELD BUT SOMETHING IN THE CAPTAIN'S TONE MADE HIM CHECK AN IMMEDIATE REFUSAL...

I KNOW FRASER, SIR. I'VE SEEN HIM UNDER FIRE. HE'S A GOOD CHAP WITH THE MEN...

... BUT DIFFICULT WITH HIS SUPERIORS. HOWEVER, I'LL RESPECT YOUR CHOICE, WAKEFIELD.



IT SO HAPPENED THAT WHEN THE TWO OFFICERS LEFT THE OFFICE, THEY AT ONCE CAUGHT SIGHT OF THE OBJECT OF THEIR EARLIER DISCUSSION...

TELL ME, WHAT MAKES SERGEANT FRASER SUCH AN AWKWARD CUSS?

VERY SIMPLE, SIR... HE DOESN'T LIKE OFFICERS!

COME ON, NOW SHARPEN UP THERE!



THE BRIGADIER'S GRUNT WAS HARDLY ONE OF APPROVAL.

AS BRIGADIER COKE TURNED TO GREET OTHER OFFICERS, WAKEFIELD APPROACHED THE SERGEANT. HE WAS INTRIGUED TO SEE HOW THE MAN WOULD REACT TO HIS WORDS...

SERGEANT FRASER, I'M TAKING LIEUTENANT LEWIS AND FORTY MEN ON A LITTLE JOB. I WANT A SENIOR N.C.O.

THEN YOU NEEDN'T LOOK FURTHER THAN ME, SIR.



BILL FRASER'S SHREWD, COMPELLING EYES FLICKED OVER THE OTHER'S FACE. WAKEFIELD LOOKED ALL RIGHT.. MAYBE THEY COULD WORK TOGETHER.

BUT THAT WAS AS FAR AS THE SERGEANT'S REGARD FOR JUNIOR OFFICERS WENT-- AS CAPTAIN KELLY, THE MEDICAL OFFICER, WAS SOON TO BE REMINDED...

WASTE OF TIME, DOC. I KNOW WHEN I'M FIT.

REALLY? DO YOU MIND IF I KNOW, TOO?



THE TOUGH, QUICK-TEMPERED KELLY FLASHED A LOOK OF ANNOYANCE AT THE GRINNING SERGEANT AND A SPARK OF MUTUAL DISLIKE WAS KINDLED BETWEEN THE TWO MEN ...

LOOK, SERGEANT, I'M IN ON THIS, TOO. AND I'M TAKING NOBODY THAT ISN'T UP TO *MY* IDEAS OF FITNESS. UNDERSTAND?



THEN CAME THE NIGHT OF OCTOBER 31st, 1944. IT WAS FINE WITH THE PROMISE OF A FULL MOON, IDEAL FOR A SKY DROP. HAVING SATISFIED HIMSELF THAT THE MAIN ATTACK FORCE WERE ASSEMBLING FOR THEIR LATER TAKE-OFF, BRIGADIER COKE HAD A FEW LAST WORDS WITH THE MEN ON WHOM SO MUCH DEPENDED -- CAPTAIN BOBBY WAKEFIELD AND HIS TARGET MARKERS.

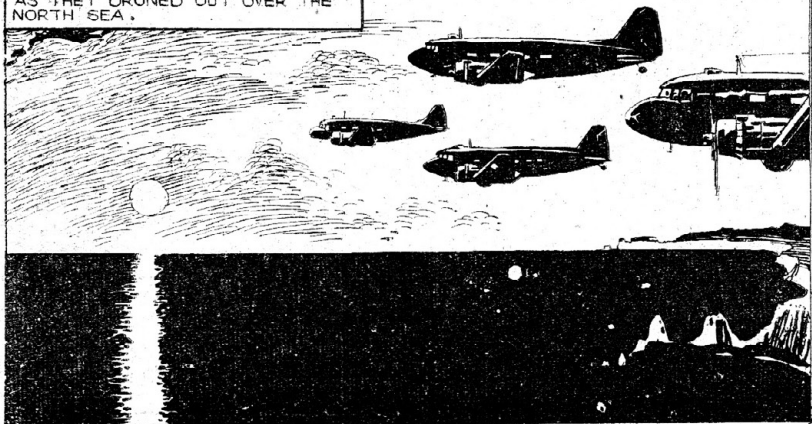


IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO YOU, WAKEFIELD, THEN LEWIS TAKES COMMAND. AFTER THAT IT'LL HAVE TO BE ... ER ... SERGEANT FRASER, I PRESUME. H'MM ... WELL, THE BEST OF LUCK!

THANK YOU, SIR.

Chapter 2. NIGHT DROP

BRIGHT MOONLIGHT SILHOUETTED BOBBY WAKEFIELD'S FIVE AIRCRAFT AS THEY DRONED OUT OVER THE NORTH SEA.



PRECISELY AT TWO MINUTES PAST MIDNIGHT THE ISLAND OF SKOLK SHOWED DARKLY BENEATH. REACHING THE SOUTHERN TIP, THE AIRCRAFT LEVELLED OUT AT 500 FEET AND THE DROP BEGAN...



SERGEANT FRASER WAS ONE OF THE FIRST TO TOUCH DOWN. WITH THE CALM OF EXPERIENCE, HE RAN AN EYE OVER THE TERRAIN -- SAND DUNES, A FEW CLUMPS OF PINE TREES, TO THE NORTH, A FOREST.



THE PARACHUTES WERE FOLDED AND HIDDEN, THE CONTAINERS RETRIEVED. THEN A CURIOUS QUIET DESCENDED, BROKEN ONLY BY THE DISTANT, LONELY BARKING OF A DOG...

NO ENEMY REACTION SO FAR. OKAY, SERGEANT, START MARKING OUT THE DROPPING ZONE.

VERY GOOD, SIR.



IT TOOK SERGEANT FRASER ALMOST AN HOUR TO SET UP THE SIGNAL AND RADAR BEACONS AND BY THAT TIME, A NEW AND ENTIRELY UNFORESEEN ENEMY HAD SWIRLED AND WRITHED TOWARDS THEM.

TARGET MARKERS READY FOR INSPECTION, SIR.

LOOK, SIR, THE MIST IS THICKENING!



They Shall Not Die

DAYLIGHT BROUGHT NO SUN TO DISPEL THE DAMPNESS OF THE NIGHT -- ONLY A LIGHTENING OF THE CLINGING VAPOUR. SERGEANT FRASER, IN A FORWARD POSITION, WAS THE FIRST TO SPOT THE ENEMY.

JERRIES!
NIP BACK AND
TELL CAPTAIN
WAKEFIELD!

RIGHT,
SARGE!



GREY-CLAD FORMS MERGED WITH THE SWIRLING MIST AS AN ALERTED ENEMY PATROL PROBED THE PARATROOPERS' POSITION. FINALLY AN ATTACK WAS MADE -- TO BE MET BY A FURY OF BRITISH FIRE ...

AIM LOW!



They Shall Not Die

THE CHARGING ENEMY FALTERED AND FELL AWAY. THEY REGROUPED IN THE MIST AND CAME AGAIN, BUT MADE NO IMPRESSION ON THE BRITISH LINE...



CAPTAIN KELLY HAD SET UP A DRESSING STATION OUTSIDE THE IMPROVED SHELTER AND AS THE CASUALTIES BEGAN TO COME IN, HE SPOKE HIS MIND SHARPLY TO ONE OF THE MEN...



PRESENTLY THERE WAS A LULL AND FRASER HIMSELF ARRIVED WITH ANOTHER WOUNDED MAN. HIS ANGRY EYES FIXED SMOULDERINGLY ON THE MEDICAL OFFICER...

YOU HAD SOME COMPLAINT, SIR?

I DON'T THINK YOU'RE PROVIDING YOUR SECTION WITH SUFFICIENT COVER, SERGEANT!

NOW LOOK HERE, SIR...



A FIERY PROTEST BURST FROM THE SERGEANT'S LIPS TO BE SILENCED INSTANTLY AS A LOW THROBBING OF AIRCRAFT ENGINES BECAME AUDIBLE...

LISTEN! PLANES!



THE VIBRANT ROAR OF THE UNSEEN PLANES FILLED THE AIR ABOVE THE DEFENDERS BUT INSTEAD OF CIRCLING THERE, THEY BEGAN TO FADE UNTIL THEY WERE LOST IN THE DISTANCE. THE FIRST FLICKERING OF HOPE WAS SNUFFED OUT IN THE PARATROOPERS' HEARTS...



THEN, AS IF TO UNDERMINE THE BRITISHERS' SPIRITS STILL MORE, THE GERMANS BEGAN A TELLING MORTAR BARRAGE WHICH THEY KEPT UP ALL THAT DAY WITH NAGGING REGULARITY ...



THE BRITISH DUG THEMSELVES INTO THEIR FOX-HOLES AND ENDURED THAT PITILESS BOMBARDMENT WITHOUT GIVING AN INCH ...




THEN, TOWARDS EVENING OF THAT FIRST DAY, A MINOR MIRACLE HAPPENED. THROUGH A MOMENTARY BREAK IN THE MURK THERE CAME A SUDDEN SHRIEK OF LOW-FLYING AIRCRAFT, AND A SHOWER OF FRESH SUPPLIES CAME SWINGING DOWN. LIEUTENANT LEWIS WAS ONE OF THE FIRST TO CRAWL AFTER THE PRECIOUS CONTAINERS.



BUT IT WAS THE LAST ACT OF A GALLANT YOUNG OFFICER...



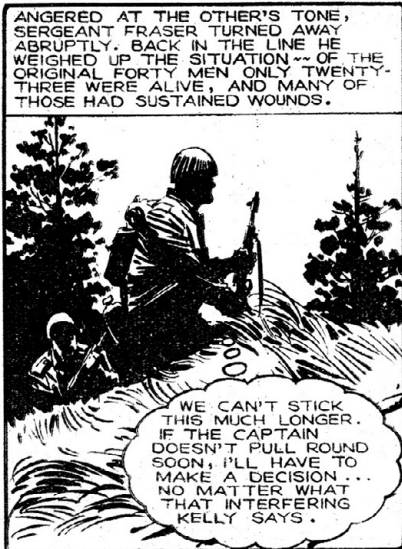


INSTINCTIVELY, CAPTAIN WAKEFIELD SPRANG TO RETRIEVE THAT TWISTED, LIFELESS BODY BUT HE, TOO, WAS BLASTED BY THE SAME MERCILESS MORTAR FIRE ...

AAGH!

THERE WAS A GASP OF STUNNED DISMAY AMONGST THE WATCHING MEN. THEN A LONG RANGY FIGURE WENT WRIGGLING TOWARDS THE INSENSIBLE CAPTAIN ... HALF CHOKED AND BLINDED BY THE FLYING GRIT, SERGEANT FRASER SUMMONED THE LAST OF HIS SINEWY STRENGTH, AND BROUGHT HIS BURDEN IN.





BILL FRASER'S TOUR OF THE DEFENSIVE POSITIONS WAS CUT SHORT AS HE WAS CALLED TO THE WOUNDED CAPTAIN'S SHELTER...



BREATHLESS FROM HIS SPRINT THROUGH RENEWED MORTAR FIRE, FRASER EYED HIS LEADER SHARPLY. HE DID NOT LIKE THE WILD GLINT IN CAPTAIN WAKEFIELD'S EYES... AND THE OFFICER'S FIRST WORDS STARTLED HIM STILL MORE...



THE SERGEANT LOOKED CLOSER INTO HIS CAPTAIN'S TWITCHING FACE, HIS SUSPICIONS MOUNTING.

SUBMARINE, SIR? WHAT SUBMARINE?

YOU KNOW VERY WELL, FRASER... **THE** SUBMARINE.

WAKEFIELD'S VOICE TOOK ON AN IRRITABLE NOTE AS FRASER HESITATED. THE SERGEANT MADE AN EXCUSE AND MOTIONED TO CAPTAIN KELLY THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK TO HIM OUTSIDE...

LISTEN, SIR, THERE WAS NO SUCH SUBMARINE MENTIONED IN OUR ORDERS. THE C.O. MUST BE DELIRIOUS OR SOMETHING. I THINK I'D BETTER TAKE CHARGE.

YOU WILL **NOT**, SERGEANT!

KELLY'S EYES BLAZED, FOR SERGEANT FRASER'S REACTION WAS JUST WHAT HE HAD EXPECTED FROM A MAN WITH A REPUTATION FOR BEING STUBBORN, AWKWARD AND INSUBORDINATE.

YOU TAKE TOO MUCH FOR GRANTED, FRASER. MAYBE YOU DON'T KNOW ALL THE FACTS. YOU'RE TOO QUICK IN YOUR SUSPICIONS OF CAPTAIN WAKEFIELD'S STATE OF MIND. KINDLY LEAVE THAT DECISION TO ME!

A SUDDEN ROAR OF ANGER SPUN THEM ROUND. IT WAS CAPTAIN WAKEFIELD HIMSELF, GROGGILY BUT DETERMINEDLY ON HIS FEET ...



EVEN AS HE SPOKE, FRASER FELT HE GUESSED THEIR THOUGHTS -- THAT HE WAS ACTING IN PRECISELY THE SAME ARGUMENTATIVE WAY AS HE HAD DONE WITH CAPTAIN ROSE, THAT NIGHT NEAR ARNHEM -- FRASER, WHO ALWAYS KNEW BETTER THAN HIS SUPERIOR OFFICER.



WAKEFIELD CHECKED A FIERCE REPLY AND THEN HESITATED QUICKLY, LEST FRASER'S WORDS TOOK EFFECT, KELLY INTERPOSED...

BOBBY, YOU'RE STILL IN COMMAND. SERGEANT FRASER'S ONLY TOO READY TO RUN THINGS HIS OWN WAY. NOW, IS THERE A SUBMARINE OR NOT?

CONFOUND IT-- OF COURSE THERE'S A SUBMARINE!



FOR SERGEANT BILL FRASER IT WAS A FATEFUL MOMENT...THE LIVES OF ALL HIS MEN HUNG TEETERING IN THE BALANCE...

IT'S LIKE CAPTAIN ROSE ALL OVER AGAIN. BUT I JUST *KNOW* I'M RIGHT. IF I GIVE WAY, WE'LL BE CUT OFF ON THAT BEACH AND PICKED OFF LIKE FLIES. WHAT DO I DO?



SUDDENLY WAKEFIELD LET OUT A GROAN...

BOBBY!



FOR FRASER, THE DECISION WAS MADE. LEAVING THE MEDICAL OFFICER TO TEND TO THE INERT WAKEFIELD, FRASER WENT TO HIS MEN...



THE MEN TOOK HIS ORDERS WITHOUT QUESTION... UNTIL THEY HEARD KELLY'S VOICE RAISED IN EXASPERATED FURY...



ALTHOUGH THE MEDICAL OFFICER'S TONE WAS ANGRY AND FORCIBLE, FRASER WAS UNMOVED...



Chapter 3. TRAIN OF COMMAND

WITH THE COMING OF DARKNESS, A FEW BATTLE-WEARY SURVIVORS STOLE AWAY WHILE THE CRACKLE OF RIFLE FIRE TOLD THEM THAT THEIR ESCAPE WAS BEING LOYALLY COVERED BY THOSE LEFT BEHIND.



WITH NO CHOICE BUT TO FOLLOW, CAPTAIN KELLY TRAMPED ALONGSIDE THE IMPROVISED STRETCHER BEARING THE STRICKEN WAKEFIELD AND HIS THOUGHTS WERE BITTERLY VENGEFUL.



WHEN THEY WERE IN THE DEPTHS OF THE WOODS, FRASER CALLED A HALT. AT ONCE KELLY STAMPED UP TO HIM...

WELL, YOU'VE BROUGHT US HERE, SERGEANT. WHAT DO WE DO NOW-- GROW WINGS AND FLY OUT?

IF YOU'LL WAIT A MOMENT, SIR-- I'LL TELL YOU WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO!

THE COVERING PARTY WERE ALREADY CATCHING UP WITH THEM AND AS SOON AS THEY WERE ONCE MORE A SINGLE FORCE, FRASER FACED THE MEN BOLDLY...

LISTEN, LADS! YOU ALL KNOW WHAT THE MAIN FORCE SHOULD HAVE DONE... HAD THE WEATHER PERMITTED, WELL, WE'RE GOING TO FIND AND DESTROY THAT HYDROGEN PLANT OURSELVES!

WHAAAT!

IGNORING THE STARTLED
INTERUPTION, HE WENT ON ...

A SMALL INFILTRATING FORCE
SUCH AS WE ARE CAN DO BETTER
THAN ANY MAJOR ASSAULT. WE'VE
GOT THE WEAPONS.. WHAT DO
YOU SAY, LADS ?



BEFORE ANY MAN COULD MOVE OR UTTER
A WORD, KELLY STEPPED FORWARD ...

NOW, LISTEN ! ALL THIS IS IN
DIRECT DEFIANCE OF CAPTAIN
WAKEFIELD'S WISHES WHICH WERE TO
CUT THROUGH TO THE SEA. THIS IS
A MAD SCHEME OF SOMEONE WHO
ALWAYS KNOWS BETTER THAN HIS
SUPERIORS. **AND WE'LL PAY
FOR IT WITH OUR LIVES !**



BILL FRASER HAD ALREADY
PROVED THAT HE HAD
COURAGE AND DECISION
AND NOW HE FOUND THAT
OTHER ATTRIBUTE OF
LEADERSHIP -- THE ABILITY
TO INSPIRE MEN.

THERE WAS NO SUBMARINE ! FORGET IT !
NOW LET'S FACE THIS THING ... WE'RE NOT
ORDINARY SOLDIERS ... **WE'RE PARATROOPS !**
WHAT WOULD THE LADS WE LEFT BEHIND AT
ARNHEM SAY IF THEY WERE HERE NOW ? IF YOU'VE
GOT A JOB TO DO -- **DO IT AND HANG
THE ODDS !** THAT'S WHAT THEY DID.
NOW LET'S DO THE SAME !



THE MEN HAD
BEGUN TO STIR,
TO PICK UP THEIR
WEAPONS. THERE
WAS NO NEED
FOR WORDS --
THEY WERE
READY.



FIVE MINUTES LATER, SERGEANT
BILL FRASER WAS LEADING HIS
GRIMLY DETERMINED PARTY
TOWARDS THE WEST... AND
THEIR OBJECTIVE.



WITH NOTHING TO GUIDE THEM THROUGH THE PERSISTENT MIST BUT FRASER'S COMPASS, THEY CAME AT LAST UPON THE CANAL LANDMARK AND FOLLOWED IT NORTHWARD. SOMEWHERE ALONG ITS BANKS STOOD THE FACTORY BUILDING ...



BILL FRASER WAS NOT SURPRISED WHEN THEY SOON FOUND THE TOWPATH BARRED. IT WAS A LOCK-KEEPER'S HOUSE, AND CLOSE BESIDE IT WERE GERMAN SENTRIES ...



THE DISHEVELLED, FEARSOME LOOKING PARATROOPS SWEEPED DOWN ON THE GERMANS OUT OF THE TRANQUIL NIGHT WITH UNNERVING SUDDENNESS.



BUT SURPRISE SWIFTLY GAVE WAY TO A SAVAGE FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL. THE GERMANS WERE BY NO MEANS INFERIOR TROOPS ...



IN THE INTENSE FURY OF THE HAND-TO-HAND FIGHTING, BILL FRASER SEEMED TO BE EVERYWHERE, CLUBBING, SMASHING, URGING HIS MEN TO GREATER EFFORTS.



HAVING SNATCHED THE EARLY INITIATIVE, FRASER'S MEN NEVER LOST IT. THERE WAS NO MATCHING THE STEELY DESPERATION OF THEIR BATTLE-TRAINED ATTACK.



They Shall Not Die



STILL KELLY PERSISTED ...



ALL ENEMY RESISTANCE HAD CEASED SO THE PARATROOPERS REFORMED AND SET OFF NORTHWARD ONCE MORE. BUT THE PACE WAS SLOW, AND SERGEANT FRASER WAS FORCED TO CALL ANOTHER HALT ...

OKAY, TAKE A BREATH. WE'VE GOT TO FIGURE SOME WAY OF MOVING FASTER. MAYBE IF WE STRUCK A ROAD ..

... WE COULD LEAVE THE CAPTAIN AT SOME HOUSE.

WE ARE *NOT* LEAVING CAPTAIN WAKEFIELD -- AND THAT'S THE END OF IT, MISTER KELLY!

WHILE THE MEN RESTED, BILL FRASER WENT SCOUTING WITH TWO MEN.

LOOK, SARGE -- A LEVEL CROSSING!

WITH THE BAR DOWN! QUICK, NIP BACK AND BRING THE REST OF THE LADS!

IT WAS SEVERAL MINUTES BEFORE THE OTHERS CAUGHT UP. THEY FOUND BILL MAKING SIGNS FOR SILENCE ...

LISTEN!

BORNE ON THE NIGHT BREEZE CAME THE RUMBLE OF A HEAVY VEHICLE.

THE RUMBLE GREW TO A ROAR AND HEADLIGHTS SWEEPED ROUND THE BEND AND RAKED THE ROAD. A LADEN LORRY AND TRAILER BRAKED TO A HALT BEFORE THE BAR ...

AN AIRFORCE VEHICLE!

AIRFIELD BASE ON THE ISLAND. MUST BE TAKING A DAMAGED PLANE TO BE SHIPPED TO THE MAINLAND. READY, NOW--
AND KEEP IT QUIET!

THE GERMAN DRIVER SWITCHED OFF HIS ENGINE AND IN THE SILENCE A NUMBER OF STEALTHY FIGURES CROPT OUT ON TO THE ROAD ...



FOR MEN TRAINED IN THE TOUGH SCHOOL OF PARATROOPING, THE TASK OF DISPOSSESSING A COUPLE OF SURPRISED GERMANS OF THEIR VEHICLE WAS A SWIFT, SIMPLE MATTER ...



CAPTAIN WAKEFIELD HAD REVIVED FOR A MOMENT BUT WAS STILL WEAK AND CONFUSED ...



THE MOMENT EVERYONE WAS ABOARD, BILL FRASER SPRANG TO THE WHEEL. THE ENGINE THROBBED INTO LIFE AGAIN AND HE ACCELERATED FORWARD TOWARDS THE CROSSING ...



Chapter 4. ROAD BLOCK

WITH THE POWERFUL ENGINE THUNDERING, THEY POUNDED THROUGH THE NIGHT. BILL WATCHED THE KILOMETRES SLIDE PAST WITH GRIM SATISFACTION. EVERY ONE BROUGHT THEM NEARER THEIR OBJECTIVE. *THEN...*



THEN FROM THE HEART OF THE ONCOMING GLARE THERE APPEARED THE WINKING OF RIFLE FIRE. NEXT SECOND, THE WINDSCREEN SPLINTERED AS IF UNDER A BARRAGE OF GIANT HAIL.



A GENERAL ALERT MUST BE ON. THE ENEMY WAS FIRING ON SIGHT. A DARK GAP APPEARED TO BILL'S RIGHT. INSTINCTIVELY, HE SWUNG THE WHEEL HARD OVER...



IN A BRIEF, HORRIFYING SECOND, BILL FRASER SAW WHAT THAT BLACKLY YAWNING PIT MEANT...

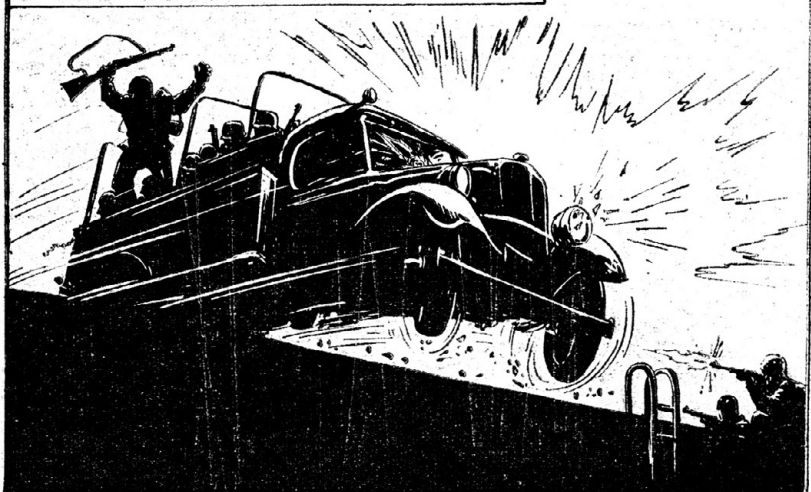


THEY HAD SWEEPED INTO A DISUSED PEACETIME RESORT.

THE SERGEANT'S RAZOR-SHARP REACTION HAD SAVED THEM AND HIS ALERT MIND WAS ALREADY LEAPING AHEAD TO HIS NEXT MOVE. HE STAMPED ON THE BRAKES, YELLED AN ORDER, AND SOME OF THE PARATROOPERS LEAPED TO THE GROUND...



THE ENEMY TRUCK SKIDDED BETWEEN THE GATE POSTS AND TWENTY-FOUR BRITISH GUNS SPOKE IN ONE SHATTERING SINGLE SOUND...



OUT OF CONTROL, THE GERMAN VEHICLE ROCKETED TO DESTRUCTION IN THE EMPTY POOL.



IN A MOMENT, BILL FRASER'S MEN WERE BACK ON THEIR CAPTURED TRUCK AND RACING BACK ON TO THE ROAD...

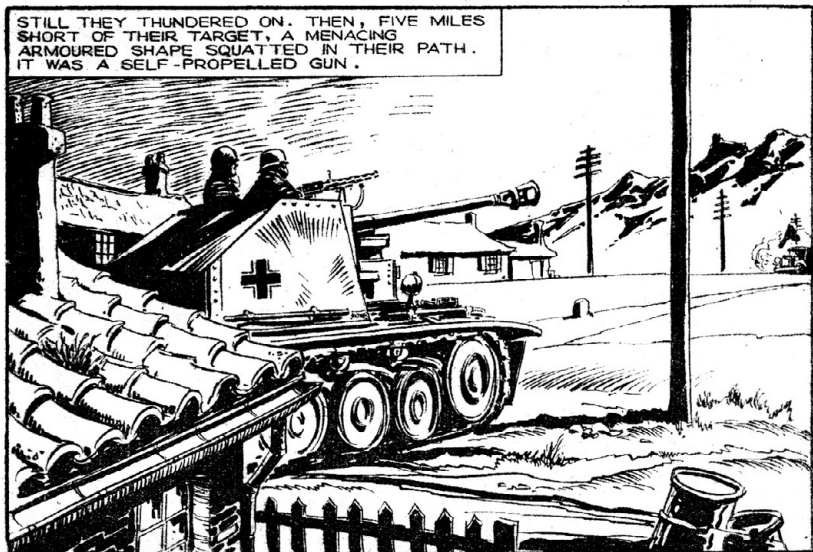
BUT AS THE SERGEANT HAD GUESSED, THE NET WAS CLOSING. THREE MILES DOWN THE ROAD, THEY HIT A BARRIER AT FULL SPEED...



... AND LATER, ANOTHER. THE HEAVY LORRY BATTERED THE OBSTRUCTION ASIDE WITHOUT PAUSING.



STILL THEY THUNDERED ON. THEN, FIVE MILES SHORT OF THEIR TARGET, A MENACING ARMoured SHAPE SQUATTED IN THEIR PATH. IT WAS A SELF-PROPELLED GUN.



INSTANTLY, THE SERGEANT PULLED TO A JOLTING HALT AND SPRANG DOWN. FOR A SECOND OR TWO HE STARED AT THE ADVANCING MONSTER AND THEN COOLLY WAVED HIS MEN DOWN ...



ROUSED BY THE SUDDEN HALT, BUT STILL WEAK AND DAZED, THE WOUNDED CAPTAIN WAKEFIELD DRAGGED HIMSELF UP ...



AS IF WARY OF THE BRITISHERS' ACTION, THE TANK COMMANDER BROUGHT THE CHURNING TRACKS TO A HALT WHILE HE PEERED OUT BESIDE HIS DRIVER. THE MUZZLE OF THE TANK SWUNG TOWARDS THE MEN IN THE DITCH AS THE MONSTER LURCHED TO A HALT. THE OFFICER INTONED FIRE ORDERS...



THEN, TO THE HORROR OF THE PARATROOPERS, THE WOUNDED CAPTAIN WAKEFIELD APPEARED AS IF FROM NOWHERE AND WITH UNSTEADY STEPS SET OFF DOWN THE ROAD TOWARDS THE ENEMY.



IT WAS ALL BILL FRASER COULD DO TO RESTRAIN HIS SHOCKED MEN ...

BUT, SARGE,
THEY'LL MURDER
'IM!

GET BACK!
THERE'S
NOTHING YOU
CAN DO!



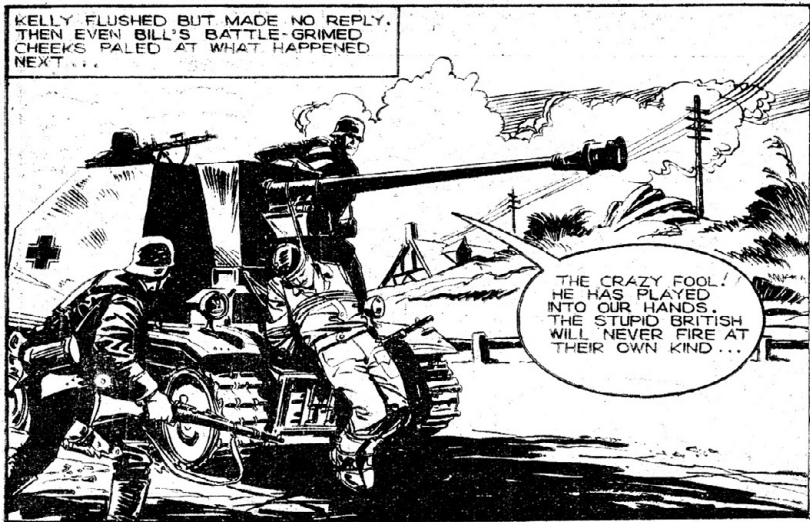
IN AN UNEARTHLY SILENCE, THE BRITISH OFFICER STUMBLED UP TO THE ENEMY GUN -- AND THE WATCHING PARATROOPERS HEARD THE LOW MUTTER OF VOICES ...

WHAT THE
DEVIL IS HE
TELLING
THEM?

D'YOU STILL
THINK HE IS
IN HIS RIGHT
MIND, MISTER
KELLY?



KELLY FLUSHED BUT MADE NO REPLY. THEN EVEN BILL'S BATTLE-GRIMED CHEEKS PALED AT WHAT HAPPENED NEXT ...



THE CRAZY FOOL!
HE HAS PLAYED
INTO OUR HANDS.
THE STUPID BRITISH
WILL NEVER FIRE AT
THEIR OWN KIND ...

A PURPLISH-ORANGE FLAME LEAPT FROM THE ENEMY GUN MUZZLE AND A GREAT GOUT OF EARTH WAS FLUNG UPWARDS AS THE SHELL EXPLODED CLOSE TO THE BRITISH . . .



THRUSTING ASIDE KELLY'S RESTRAINING HAND, THE SERGEANT SPRANG FROM COVER, A MILLS GRENADE TIGHT IN HIS HAND . . .



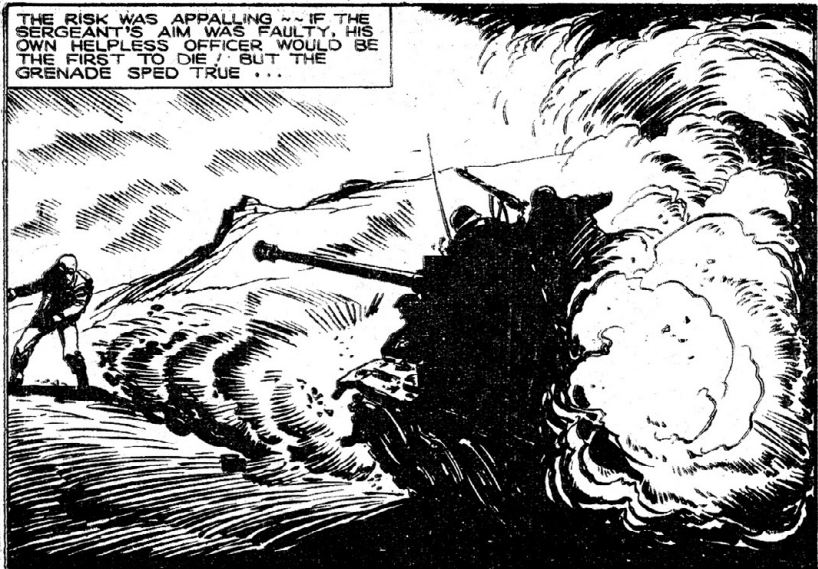
THE ENEMY MACHINE-GUN GROPED FOR THE RACING, DESPERATELY WEAVING FIGURE.



BULLETS RIPPED THE GROUND ALL ABOUT HIM, BUT STILL BILL RACED ON -- THEN HIS ARM SWUNG IN A POWERFUL ARC ...



THE RISK WAS APPALLING -- IF THE SERGEANT'S AIM WAS FAULTY, HIS OWN HELPLESS OFFICER WOULD BE THE FIRST TO DIE -- BUT THE GRENADE SPED TRUE ...



THE MOBILE GUN'S TRACK WHIPLASHED APART AND THE TANK LURCHED TO ONE SIDE. THE SERGEANT CLAWED HIS WAY UP ITS SIDE AND HURLED ANOTHER GRENADE THROUGH THE OPEN HATCH ...



A SECOND LATER THERE WAS A MUFFLED ROAR WITHIN AND THEN CAME THE SILENCE OF DEATH.

They Shall Not Die

BILL FRASER SPRANG TO THE GROUND AND SLASHED THE BONDS HOLDING CAPTAIN WAKEFIELD. THE OFFICER WAS DAZED BUT CONSCIOUS ...

HOW IS IT, SIR?

MY CONFOUNDED HEAD ... ACHES LIKE THE DEVIL.

AT THAT MOMENT THE PARATROOPERS REACHED THE WRECKED ENEMY VEHICLE AND THE MEDICAL OFFICER WAS QUICK TO STATE HIS FEELINGS ...

THE CAPTAIN'S HAD ENOUGH. I INSIST ON LODGING HIM AT THE NEXT HOUSE WE SEE.

SORRY, MISTER KELLY! WE'LL TRY TO FIND A QUIET SPOT WHERE YOU CAN GIVE HIM ATTENTION — THAT'S ALL I CAN PROMISE YOU.

AND CAPTAIN KELLY WAS FORCED TO BOW TO THE AUTHORITY AND CONFIDENCE IN THE SERGEANT'S VOICE.

IT NEEDED ALL BILL'S FORCEFUL DETERMINATION TO GET THE EXHAUSTED MEN MOVING AGAIN. BUT MOVE THEY DID, STRIVING TO REMAIN ALERT WHEN EVERY SENSE CRAVED REST. INEVITABLY HE LED THEM ON. THERE WERE PATROLS TO SKIRT, DODGE AND HIDE FROM...



HAD THEIR LEADER BEEN LESS RESOLUTE, THE MEN WOULD HAVE SOON GIVEN WAY TO A BLACKNESS OF SPIRIT. BUT SOMEHOW THEY KEPT GOING ~~~ AND PRESENTLY THEY STRUCK A RAILWAY AND THEN A DISUSED-LOOKING SIDING. THE SERGEANT AT ONCE SENT OFF SCOUTS AND ORDERED THE OTHERS INTO SOME WAGONS.



PHYSICALLY, CAPTAIN WAKEFIELD PROVED TO BE IN BETTER CONDITION THAN EXPECTED. GONE WAS THE WILD LOOK BUT THE SPEECH WAS SLURRED AND OFTEN IRRELEVANT.



SUDDENLY THE DOOR JARRED OPEN AND AN EXCITED PARATROOPER LOOKED IN.



BILL FOLLOWED THE SCOUT THROUGH THE SURROUNDING WOODS TO A POINT OVERLOOKING THE COUNTRYSIDE. WHAT HE SAW BROUGHT A GRUNT OF SATISFACTION ...



THE NEWS DID MUCH TO CHEER THE FLAGGING MEN AND BILL LET THEM REST TILL NIGHTFALL. THEN HE LED THEM CAUTIOUSLY ACROSS COUNTRY UNTIL AT LONG LAST THEY WERE WITHIN STRIKING DISTANCE OF THEIR TARGET ...



Chapter 5. PRIZE OF WAR

NOT A SOUND CAME FROM WITHIN THE FACTORY BUILDINGS, BUT A LIGHT SHOWED NEAR THE MAIN DOORS ...



FOR LONG, TENSE MINUTES THEY WAITED, BUT THERE WAS NOT A SIGN OF MOVEMENT. SILENTLY, THEY CREPT FORWARD AGAIN -- THEN SWEEPED OPEN THE DOOR OF THE ROOM FROM WHICH THE LIGHT CAME -- ONLY TO HALT ON THE THRESHOLD IN SURPRISE



THESE MEN WERE NOT THE EXPECTED GERMAN GUARDS. THEY WERE NOT EVEN SOLDIERS. BILL'S EYES FLICKED OVER THE BARE ROOM, THE PACKING CASES, THE WOOD SHAVINGS... A SWIFT SEARCH OF THE ECHOING ROOMS TOLD THE SUDDENLY HEARTSICK SERGEANT THE TRUTH....



BILL BRACED HIMSELF. ROUGHLY PUSHING DOWN HIS DISAPPOINTMENT, AND STRODE OVER TO THE GERMAN CIVILIANS. HIS VOICE WAS HARSH, THREATENING, BROOKING NO DENIAL.

THE HYDROGEN PLANT HAS BEEN REMOVED... *WHEN?*

WHEN? BUT *NOW*, ENGLANDER! ALL MUST GO TO THE MAINLAND... TO THE FATHERLAND.

WE ARE EXPERT PACKERS... SENT ESPECIALLY.



WORDS TREMBLING ON THE
WORKMEN'S LIPS, THEY
HELD NOTHING BACK...

WHERE IS IT
NOW...ALL THAT
MACHINERY?

DOWN
AT THE WHARF...
IN A SHIP.

THE SHIP
SOON LEAVES...
IN JUST AN
HOUR.



SUDDENLY THERE CAME A SPLINTERING OF GLASS AND
A SHATTERED WINDOW TINKLED TO THE FLOOR.

WHAT
THE...



MOVING LIKE LIGHTNING, BILL FRASER LEAPED TO THE LIGHT SWITCH. IN THE ENSUING DARKNESS, HE SPRANG TO THE WINDOW ...

JERRIES!
THEY MUST HAVE
TRAILED US!



COME OUT,
ENGLANDERS!
SURRENDER!

THE SERGEANT QUIETLY CURSED HIS LUCK. IF ONLY THEY COULD HAVE SLIPPED DOWN TO THE LITTLE PORT... TO THE LOADED SHIP. BUT THAT CHERISHED AMBITION SEEMED DOOMED. INSTEAD THEY FACED A HOPELESS SIEGE ...

**THERE'S
YOUR ANSWER,
JERRIES!**



THIRTY MINUTES
BEFORE THAT SHIP
SAILS... AND
SOMEHOW WE'VE
GOT TO BE THERE!

SUDDENLY HE REMEMBERED THE TUBE-LIKE LOADING SLUICE OVERHANGING THE CANAL AND TAKING TWO MEN, HE FOUND IT -- AND TESTED IT!



THE GERMANS, THINKING THIS WALL THE BLIND SIDE, GAVE IT NO ATTENTION. ONE BY ONE THE PARATROOPERS AND THEIR WOUNDED CAPTAIN SLID DOWN TO THE BARGE WHICH WAS MOORED ALONGSIDE THE WALL. THEN THEY CUT IT ADRIFT AND FLOATED OFF ON THE CURRENT.



BEHIND THEM THEY HEARD THE GERMANS STILL FIRING FURIOUSLY AT THE DESERTED FACTORY WHILE THE BARGE FETCHED UP AMONGST OTHERS WAITING AT THE LOCK GATES LEADING INTO THE TINY HARBOUR.



BILL LED HIS MEN LIKE PHANTOMS THROUGH THE SHADOWS TO THE QUAYSIDE WHERE A SMALL CARGO SHIP SEEMED ABOUT TO DEPART.



IT WAS NO MOMENT FOR CAUTION -- SERGEANT FRASER HEADED A WILD, BLOOD-CURDLING CHARGE THAT FOR A FEW PRECIOUS SECONDS FROZE EVERY GERMAN ON THE QUAY.



IN THREE STRIDES HE WAS UP THE GANGWAY. BEFORE HIM STOOD A BEARDED OFFICER -- THE CAPTAIN OF THE SHIP.

BY THUNDER! WE'RE GOING TO PULL IT OFF! GET THIS SHIP OUT, QUICK ... AND DO AS I SAY!

THERE IS NO NEED FOR VIOLENCE, SERGEANT. I AM DANISH.



THE DANE TURNED ALMOST EAGERLY TO HIS ENGINE-ROOM TELEGRAPH. FROM THE BOWELS OF THE SHIP CAME AN ANSWERING JANGLE -- THEY BEGAN TO MOVE AWAY FROM THE STONE QUAY ...



They Shall Not Die

THE PARATROOPERS' CONCENTRATED FIRE HAD SENT THE GERMANS DIVING FOR COVER, BUT AS THEY SAW THE SHIP HEADING TOWARDS THE OPEN SEA, THEY RACED LIKE MADMEN TO THE HARBOUR EXIT IN A DESPAIRING EFFORT TO STOP THE ESCAPE.



BUT THEY COULD NOT STOP THE SHIP. BY A LITTLE AFTER MIDNIGHT, THE MOPPING UP ABOARD WAS COMPLETE. IN HIGH SPIRITS THE MEN GATHERED AROUND THEIR TOUGH, INVINCIBLE SERGEANT.



AS THE SHIP BEGAN TO LIFT TO THE DEEPER SWELL, BILL FRASER SLIPPED BELOW WITH ONE LAST ANXIETY ON HIS MIND. TO HIS RELIEF, HE FOUND CAPTAIN WAKEFIELD COMFORTABLE AND ASLEEP, BUT KELLY'S ATTITUDE WAS STILL OBSTINATELY NON-COMMITTAL...

THANKS FOR GETTING THE CAPTAIN ABOARD, SIR.

YOU DID WELL, SERGEANT FRASER. BUT I WARN YOU THAT I MAY STILL HAVE TO TAKE DISCIPLINARY ACTION FOR FLOUTING A SUPERIOR'S ORDERS.



THEY WERE THREE HOURS OUT FROM LAND WHEN A LOOK-OUT'S HOARSE CRY SUDDENLY RANG OUT... **TOO LATE!**

TORPEDO!



IN A FEW FRENZIED MINUTES THE LITTLE SHIP WAS
FOUNDERING. THERE WAS NO TIME TO LAUNCH THE
BOATS -- EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF! SERGEANT
FRASER FOUND HIS INJURED CAPTAIN CLOSE BESIDE
HIM, GASPING FROM THE CRUEL COLD OF THE WATER.

THIS WAY, SIR!
GRAB HOLD OF
THIS RAFT!



THE CREW OF THE DANISH SHIP MINGLED WITH THE PARATROOPERS AMONGST
THE FLOATING WRECKAGE AS A DARK SHAPE NOSED IN AMONGST THEM. AN
APOLOGETIC ENGLISH VOICE REACHED THEIR EARS...



SORRY, GENTLEMEN,
BUT THIS IS WAR.
WE SHALL HAVE
TO TAKE YOU
PRISONER.

GOOD GRIEF!
AN M.T.B.!

OUR OWN
PERISHIN'
NAVY!

THE TORPEDO BOAT'S YOUNG NAVAL COMMANDER WILTED AS SERGEANT FRASER TOLD HIM WHAT HIS VICTIM HAD BEEN ...

YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'VE DONE... YOU'VE JUST SUNK A COMPLETE GERMAN HYDROGEN PLANT! WE'D CAPTURED THE DARN THING... SHIP AND ALL!



GREAT SCOTT!

AS THE POWERFUL CRAFT PICKED UP SPEED, THE COLD, WET PARATROOPERS FORGOT THEIR DISCOMFORT AND WARMED TO THOUGHTS OF HOME. SERGEANT FRASER WAS CALLED BELOW TO HIS CAPTAIN ...

CAPTAIN WAKEFIELD'S QUITE RECOVERED, FRASER ... THE SHOCK OF IMMERSION MUST HAVE DONE THE TRICK.

SERGEANT, I HAVE MUCH TO THANK YOU FOR, I UNDERSTAND.

THAT'S GRAND, SIR!



FOR SERGEANT BILL FRASER IT WAS A MOMENT OF VINDICATION FOR ALL HIS ACTIONS ...

YOU RISKED YOUR HONOUR, SERGEANT FRASER ... AND BACKED YOUR OWN JUDGMENT. IT IS THANKS ONLY TO THAT FACT THAT THE MISSION SUCCEEDED AND THAT WE ALL CAME THROUGH.

MY PROFOUND APOLOGIES, SERGEANT... THERE WAS NO SUBMARINE, CAPTAIN WAKEFIELD TELLS ME.

THANK YOU, SIR!



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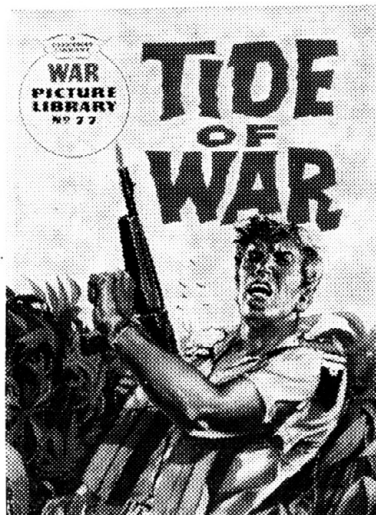
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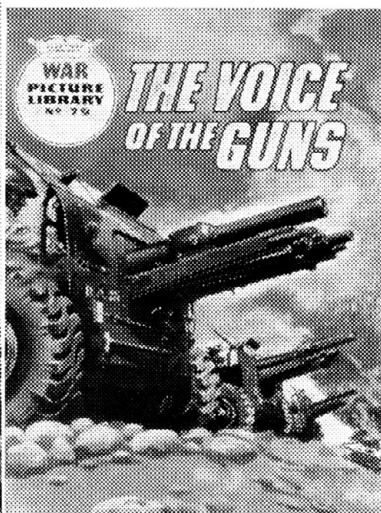
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